

REPRESENTATIONS OF SAMARITANS IN LATE ANTIQUE JEWISH AND  
CHRISTIAN TEXTS

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A DISSERTATION

in

Religious Studies

Presented to the Faculties of the University of Pennsylvania

in

Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the

Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

2019

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## ABSTRACT

### REPRESENTATIONS OF SAMARITANS IN LATE ANTIQUE JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN TEXTS

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Samaritans, like Jews and Christians, trace their identity to ancient Israel. Today, they are a minority in Israel-Palestine. In antiquity, however, they appear frequently in our sources from the late antique eastern Mediterranean, from scripture, to midrash, to Roman law, to heresiology, to rabbinic literature, and beyond. Therefore, one would expect to see Samaritans heavily represented in scholarship, both within Religious Studies and in cognate disciplines, which has over several decades developed a toolkit using attention to representations of identity and alterity to both reconstruct the past and interrogate our own categorization and classification of difference. Nevertheless, the group receives little attention, often reduced to their few biblical appearances and to debates about the moment at which the group divorced from Judaism. In this dissertation, I decouple Samaritans from Biblical Studies in my first chapter, arguing the racialized construction of the Samaritan in New Testament scholarship has compressed and delineated the intellectual architecture of scholars. I then expand discussion of Samaritan difference into a sample of sources from the fourth- through to sixth-century East, both within the Roman Empire (Cyril of Jerusalem, Epiphanius of Cyprus, John Chrysostom,

and Amphilochius of Iconium) and in Sasanian Babylonia (the Babylonian Talmud). I articulate how representations of Samaritans work in Jewish and Christian texts, providing a series of studies of how and in which ways ancient Samaritan others mattered in the late antique machinery generating religious identity. In the process, I model an approach to ancient religious identity and alterity more sensitive to the array of difference in our sources than existing scholarship. I thereby provide a case study of one way to decompress habits of scholarly selectivity towards our sources. By looking at the mismatch between the historical presence of Samaritans and their historiographical neglect, I make visible for critique the binary logic of ancient religious difference that still shapes the field in terms of adjacency to the difference between a polarity of Jewish and Christian identity. Samaritans thus serve as a catalyst for binary-resistant scholarly narratives of religious identity and classification, and a case-study for non-reductive approaches to underworked or minoritized groups.

## INTRODUCTION: SAMARITANS IN LATE ANTIQUITY AND THE HISTORY OF SCHOLARSHIP

Today, the Israelite Samaritans are a small ethno-religious minority in modern Israel-Palestine. In antiquity, however, they had a much more extensive Mediterranean-wide population from Egypt to Greece, small population clusters even in Italy and Sicily, and comprised a significant portion of the population of Roman then Islamic Palestine. Like Jews and Christians, they accept the Pentateuch as scripture, even if they reject claims that any other texts count as scripture, taking seriously the statement of Deut. 34:10 that since his death there has arisen “no prophet like Moses.” Like Jews, they are Torah-observant. Like Jews, Christians, and Muslims, Samaritans have traced their identity ever since antiquity to ancient Israel.

Writing between 374 and 377, the fourth-century bishop Epiphanius of Cyprus, likewise, embedded the group in the history of post-exilic Israel:

So, also at this time we have been discussing, the one *threskeia* of Israel having slipped away, and the scriptures according to law likewise to another genus – I mean to the Assyrian, of whom the Samaritans are descendants (ἐξ ὧν Σαμαρεῖται οἱ ἐγκάθετοι). And then opinions differed, and after that error began, and dissonance to sow seed from the one true piety into many falsely-made knowledges, just as it seemed to each person, to think themselves trained in letters, and to assert each to their own will.<sup>1</sup>

For Epiphanius, the division of the *threskeia*, the cultic community, of Israel depends on the narrative presence of Samaritans. According to his argument, Israel

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<sup>1</sup> *Panarion* 8.9.1-4; Holl 1.196.16-1.197.11; from standard Greek edition by Holl, now emended and reissued in *Epiphanius I: Ancoratus and Panarion haer. 1-33* (GCS n.F. 10.1; edited by Karl Holl, Marc Bergemann, and Christian-Friedrich Collatz; Berlin: De Gruyter, 2013); *Epiphanius II: Panarion haer. 34-64* (GCS 31; edited by Karl Holl and Jürgen Dummer; Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1980); *Epiphanius III: Panarion haer. 65-80; De Fide* (GCS 37; edited by Karl Holl and Jürgen Dummer; Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1985).

had remained unified in its reception of the scriptures prior to their migration and assimilation. The Samaritans, in other words, made Jewish heresies possible.

*Genesis Rabbah*, a roughly contemporaneous fourth- or fifth century anthology of Palestinian midrashic interpretation on Genesis, the first book of the Pentateuch and a shared scripture between Christians, Jews, and Samaritans, recalls two parallel versions of this story, given here in its shorter form:

And R. Yishmael recalled that R. Yose went up to pray in Jerusalem. He passed by a place with a plane tree, and met a certain Samaritan (*shamrai*). He said, “For what reason are you going out?” The other replied, “To go up and pray in Jerusalem.” He said, “Why isn’t it good for you to pray at this blessed mountain [i.e. Gerizim] and not that ruined house?” He said, “I say to them, why do they imitate a dog which is anxious for rotting carrion—since they know that idols have been hidden beneath it—“and Jacob hid them” (Gen 35:4)—for this reason, they are anxious for it? Because of this they pray to uncleanness, and go up and chase Belial.”<sup>2</sup>

In this narrative, an encounter with a Samaritan (*shamrai*) sparks an exegetical contest. What does the Torah say about the mountain Gerizim, the mountain the Samaritan calls “blessed”? Samaritans claimed this mountain had always been the site of acceptable worship of the God of Israel over against Jerusalem, the latter of which only became a place of worship because of Jewish corruption of Israelite practice. The midrash signals an awareness of polarized Pentateuchal exegesis, and narrativizes the contested territory as exegetical combat between rabbi and Samaritan.

I work from a simple insight. The importance which Epiphanius attributes to Samaritans in his prehistory of heresy, and the normality of the encounter with Samaritans in *Genesis Rabbah*, are just two pieces in a much larger array of late antique Jewish and Christian representations of Samaritans. Samaritans, therefore,

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<sup>2</sup> *Genesis Rabbah* 81:3.

appear in many of the same texts so fruitfully used to reconstruct and interrogate late antique Jewish and Christian identity. Nevertheless, even though Samaritans have received increasingly more attention from scholars in recent decades, Samaritan presence has not yet been leveraged to adjust scholarly narratives about late antique religion. How can these appearances translate into a more expansive scholarly account of late antique identity and affiliation? How can noticing the mismatch between Samaritan presence in our sources and Samaritan absence in scholarly narrative help realign scholarly selectivity? When, and why, do scholars compress complex taxonomies of ancient difference, and complex arrays of knowledge claims about scripture, holy practice, and the past of Israel, to speak to Jewishness and Christianness as prototypic – and polarized – terms?

To address this mismatch between ancient sources and lack of scholarly attention, I unite scholarship from Samaritan Studies, Early Christianity, New Testament Studies, and Jewish Studies around patristic and rabbinic texts. In the process, I recognize Samaritans in the engine-room of late antique identity production, decoupling them from the watchful gaze of Biblical Studies, and introducing them into more expansive interdisciplinary discussions about identity, difference, alterity, and representation. It is not only that Samaritans are “another contestant in the arena.”<sup>3</sup> They contest the same Israelite identity and scriptural past as Jews and Christians (and later, Muslims). They are therefore an ideal limit to case to query the

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<sup>3</sup> Leah Di Segni, “*Early Christian Authors on Samaritans and Samaritanism: A Review Article*,” *JSJ* 37.2 (2006): 241-259, at 241.

scope of our scholarly narratives about how Jewishness and Christianness developed in antiquity, especially when, as so often, our narratives exclude Samaritan by default.

In this introduction, I first track how scholars have often concentrated on the possibility that knowledge of Samaritans meant primarily special knowledge of the biblical past. For this reason, Samaritan Studies has engaged the group only in a relatively compressed way, linked to the study of the Bible. Second, I theorize how to expand discussions of Samaritans by drawing attention to the greatest concentration of sources for ancient Samaritans, in late antiquity. Such a discussion also helps renovate late antiquity accounts of religion and difference, since the methodological reforms driving the field leave less time and energy for scrutinizing the selection of unfamiliar topics for sustained study. Finally, I introduce and critique identity, a concept particularly important for the study of late antiquity, before ending with a chapter survey.

### *Ancient Samaritans and Samaritan Studies*

In 1906, James A. Montgomery jumpstarted the modern Anglophone study of the Samaritans with his *Samaritans*. The academy at the time, however, was relatively unimpressed. “Are the Samaritans worth,” one reviewer wrote in the *Expository Times*, “a volume of 360 pages?”<sup>4</sup> One hundred and ten years later, Reinhard Pummer, one of several Anglophone scholars who dedicated a career to reclaiming the Samaritans as a topic of scholarly study, begins his spiritual successor to Montgomery’s book by quoting the scathing *Expository Times* review juxtaposed with

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<sup>4</sup> Anonymous, “Review: *The Samaritans, The Earliest Jewish Sect: Their History, Theology, and Literature by James Montgomery*,” *Expository Times* 18 (1907): 548.



a more recent assertion that there has been “an explosion in recent years in the publication of Samaritan texts and secondary discussions based upon them.”<sup>5</sup> As Pummer says, the field has seen a “change from the almost total neglect of anything that has to do with the Samaritans to a heightened interest in their history and religion.”

Nevertheless, Pummer’s assessment only tells part of the story. Steven Fine notices both the extent and low impact of growth in Samaritan studies scholarship: “the explosion in Samaritan studies...has quietly occurred in recent years, with discovery and publication of numerous Samaritan sites – village, synagogue, and burial syncretic studies and, most importantly for Sivan, R. Pummer’s *Early Christian Authors on Samaritans and Samaritanism*.”<sup>6</sup> In the rest of this section, I present the story of this scholarship, suggesting that the limits dampening a broader recognition of Samaritan significance have resulted from a scholarly desire to reclaim Samaritans within the same master narrative that led to a fading of interest in the nineteenth century: Biblical Studies.

After something of a fin-de-siecle downturn, the dawn of the twentieth century saw two regional concentrations of the scholarly story of Samaritans, one Anglophone and one spanning Germany and Israel. Both groups explicitly aimed to counteract the neglect of Samaritans, to reclaim them for the study of the Israelite past. English-language scholarship on Samaritan Studies is a series of Anglophone rebirths tagged

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<sup>5</sup> Reinhard Pummer, *The Samaritans: A Profile* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016), ix; citing H.G.M. Williamson and Craig A. Evans, “Samaritans” in *Dictionary of New Testament Background*, edited by Craig A. Evans and Stanley E. Porter (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2000).

<sup>6</sup> Steven Fine, “Review: Hagith Sivan, *Palestine in Late Antiquity*,” *Review of Biblical Literature* 10 (2009): 1-6, at 3.

to the American James Montgomery in Philadelphia and the Romanian Sephardic chief rabbi Moses Gaster in London. The former published what became a handbook for Samaritan Studies for more than eighty years.<sup>7</sup> The latter's extensive Hebrew Bible scholarship included a lively interest in Samaritan texts, as well as a significant correspondence of over five hundred letters exchanged with contemporaneous Samaritans in Nablus.<sup>8</sup> Simultaneously, the librarian and semiticist Arthur E. Cowley published, in collaboration with Alfred Neubauer, his still unsurpassed volumes collating Samaritan liturgy.<sup>9</sup>

Building on this Anglophone expertise, a circle of scholars in Leeds, England particularly interested in examining the New Testament, most notably John Bowman and John MacDonald, produced a critical mass of Samaritan Studies scholarship.<sup>10</sup> Such efforts were supported by the DSS discoveries, and a resurgence in interest in Samaritan witnesses to Hebrew Bible text.<sup>11</sup> As mentioned above, readings previously seen as late Samaritan edits often appeared in the Qumran material, without any sign of their being attached to any "sectarian" version of the Pentateuch circulating

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<sup>7</sup> James A. Montgomery, *The Samaritans: The Earliest Jewish Sect* (Philadelphia: John C. Winston, 1907).

<sup>8</sup> See in particular his Schweich lectures of 1923, published as Moses Gaster, *The Samaritans: Their History, Doctrines, and Literature* (see above); also Ingrid Hjelm, *The Samaritans and Early Judaism: A Literary Analysis* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 22-30. An ongoing digitization project underway at the University of Manchester aims to catalogue and digitize this correspondence: <http://www.manchesterjewishstudies.org/moses-gaster-project/>.

<sup>9</sup> Arthur E. Cowley, *The Samaritan Liturgy*, 2 volumes (Oxford: Clarendon, 1909).

<sup>10</sup> See for an important overview of their work and its limits Earl Richard, "Acts 7: An Investigation of the Samaritan Evidence," *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 39:2 (1977): 190-208, at 190-92.

<sup>11</sup> A conversation plausibly tracked to a short article by Patrick W. Skehan, "Exodus in the Samaritan Recension from Qumran," *JBL* 74 (1955): 182-87.

separately.<sup>12</sup> Hypotheses of Samaritan authorship even accompanied the publication of at least two texts from amongst the Qumran finds: Milik suggested a Samaritan origin for 1 Enoch, and both Milik and Kugler attribute *Aramaic Levi* to a Samaritan background.<sup>13</sup>

From the 1980s, subsequently, a third wave of Anglophone Samaritan Studies significantly expanded the potential reach of the field. Spearheaded by Alan D. Crown, the *Société d'Études Samaritaines* was founded, with the explicit aim of producing a community to systematically further the study of the Samaritans in their own right. While not bursting onto the scholarly scene per se, the gains made by Samaritan Studies show no sign of abating. Here we come full circle to Di Segni's observation about an "explosion" in the field, and the works which I mentioned in opening this chapter.

This English-language interest worked often in parallel, but increasingly in concert, with more continuous Hebrew- and German-language scholarship, built on a legacy from the nineteenth century.<sup>14</sup> Notably, this interest translated to the Israeli academy, where the first president of the Israeli secular nation-state Yitzhak Ben-Zvi also enthusiastically pursued regional history, particularly the history of the

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<sup>12</sup> See in particular the work of Frank Moore Cross and his student James D. Purvis, particularly the latter's *The Samaritan Pentateuch and the Origin of the Samaritan Sect* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968); also Richard J. Coggins, *Samaritans and Jews: The Origins of Samaritanism Reconsidered* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1975).

<sup>13</sup> J.T. Milik (ed.), *The Books of Enoch: Aramaic Fragments of Qumran Cave 4* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), 9-10, 31; Robert A. Kugler, *From Patriarch to Priest: The Levi-Priestly Tradition from Aramaic Levi to Testament of Levi* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 137.

<sup>14</sup> There is no better illustration of this than the fact that the most extensive grammars of Samaritan Hebrew and Aramaic outside of modern Hebrew are both German, by Rudolf Macuch: *Grammatik des Samaritanischen Hebräisch* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1969); *Grammatik des Samaritanischen Aramäisch* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1982).

Samaritans.<sup>15</sup> The most important linguistic work on Samaritan Hebrew and Aramaic continues to be Israeli, especially due to the field-defining work of Ze'ev Ben-Hayyim and Abraham Tal, and the activity of the Samaritan scholar and activist Benyamim Tsedaka.<sup>16</sup> Similarly, critical editions emerging only now with English translations follow in the footsteps of pathfinding editions by Israeli scholars.<sup>17</sup> Moreover, extensive excavations since the 1960s have produced a mass of epigraphic and archaeological evidence with which to write new histories of Samaritan antiquity.<sup>18</sup> This ranges from the Wadi Daliyah discoveries of Samaritan populations fleeing Alexander the Great, to Yitzhak Magen's extensive excavations at Shechem and Gerizim, to the late antique estate at Raqat.<sup>19</sup> Especially important, a number of Samaritan synagogues have been excavated within modern-day Israel which were

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<sup>15</sup> See his *Book of the Samaritans*, rev. ed. by Shemaryahu Talmon (Jerusalem: Yad Itzhak Ben-Zvi, 1970).

<sup>16</sup> Especially Ze'ev Ben-Hayyim, *The Literary and Oral Tradition of Hebrew and Aramaic Amongst the Samaritans*, 5 volumes (Jerusalem: Academy of the Hebrew Language, 1957-1977) [Heb.]; Ze'ev Ben-Hayyim and Abraham Tal, *A Grammar of Samaritan Hebrew. Based on the Recitation of the Law in Comparison with the Tiberian and other Jewish Traditions* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2000); Abraham Tal, *A Dictionary of Samaritan Aramaic*, 2 volumes (Leiden: Brill, 2000); Abraham Tal, *Samaritan Aramaic* (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2013).

<sup>17</sup> Ze'ev Ben-Hayyim, *Tibât Mârqe: A Collection of Samaritan Midrashim* (Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1988) [Heb.]; Moshe Florentin, *The Tuldā: A Samaritan Chronicle. Text, Translatio, Commentary* (Jerusalem: Yad Itzhak Ben Zvi, 1999) [Heb.]; Abraham Tal, *The Samaritan Targum of the Pentateuch: A Critical Edition*, 3 volumes (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, 1980-83) [Heb.]; Abraham Tal, *The Samaritan Pentateuch Edited According to MS 6 (C) of the Shechem Synagogue* (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, 1994) [Heb.]; Abraham Tal and Moshe Florentin (eds.), *The Pentateuch: The Samaritan Version and the Masoretic Version* (Tel Aviv: The Haim Rubin Tel Aviv University Press, 2010) [Heb.]. Benyamim Tsedaka recently published the first full English-language translation of the Samaritan Pentateuch: *The Israelite Samaritan Version of the Torah: First English Translation Compared with the Masoretic Version* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013).

<sup>18</sup> For a summary, see Pummer, *Samaritans*, 74-118.

<sup>19</sup> For the Wadi Daliyah excavations in 1962: Mary Joan Winn Leith, *The Wadi Daliyah Seal Impressions Vol. I* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997); Douglas Marvin Gropp, *Wadi Daliyah II: The Samaria Papyri from Wadi Daliyah* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001); Jan Dušek, *Les manuscrits araméens du Wadi Daliyah et la Samarie vers 450-332 av. J.-C* (Leiden: Brill, 2007). For Shechem and Gerizim, see Magen's excavation reports (above.) For the Raqat estate, see Shimon Dar and Baruch Arensburg (eds.), *Raqat: Marinus' Estate on the Carmel, Israel* (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2004).

unknown prior, and significantly augment our scant literary references to late antique Samaritan sites of worship.<sup>20</sup>

Most of this scholarship reiterates the archaeological and philological emphases of Biblical Studies, wedded to a view of the Samaritans as a distinct (and thus helpfully comparable) ethnic and religious group with a distinct and ancient Pentateuch, who appear in the New Testament, and are thus important for the study of the Bible. Important bibliography is scattered throughout various disciplines, especially where it departs from this philological and Bible-inflected core to treat anthropology, halakha, art, archaeology, or inscriptions.<sup>21</sup>

One recently published volume in De Gruyter's *Studia Samaritana* series encapsulates, in a nutshell, both the scope and limits of this research.<sup>22</sup> One of its contributors, Konrad Schmid, explicitly laments the attachment of Biblical Studies writ large to "sub-Deuteronism" and "sub-Chronicism," the separation anxieties scholars fear in moving away from an account of the Israelite past that contradicts the broad arc of the historical books of the Hebrew Bible.<sup>23</sup> Nevertheless, this does not

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<sup>20</sup> Reinhard Pummer, "Samaritan Synagogues and Jewish Synagogues: Similarities and Differences," in *Jews, Christians, and Polytheists in the Ancient Synagogue: Cultural Interaction during the Greco-Roman Period*, ed. Steven Fine (London: Routledge, 1999), 118-60.

<sup>21</sup> To give one example, tackling the Samaritan diaspora requires a dance between little-read journals: József Zsengellér, "The Samaritan Diaspora in Antiquity," *Acta Ant. Hung.* 56 (2016): 157-75; also Pieter van der Horst, "Samaritans at Rome?" in his *Japhet in the Tents of Shem: Studies on Jewish Hellenism in Antiquity* (Leuven: Peeters, 2002), 251-60; especially for scholarship before the 1970s, see Alan D. Crown, "The Samaritan Diaspora to the End of the Byzantine Era," *Australian Journal of Biblical Archaeology* 2 (1974): 107-23. Even one of the more recent bibliographic overviews is hidden away in a bibliographic piece in a lengthy edited volume: David M. Gwynn, "Religious Diversity in Late Antiquity: A Bibliographic Essay," in *Religious Diversity in Late Antiquity*, ed. David Gwynn and Susanne Bangert (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 13-132.

<sup>22</sup> Magnar Kartveit and Gary N. Knoppers (eds.), *The Bible, Qumran, and the Samaritans* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2018).

<sup>23</sup> Konrad Schmid, "Overcoming the Sub-Deuteronism and Sub-Chronicism of Historiography in Biblical Studies: The Case of the Samaritans," in Kartveit and Knoppers, *The Bible*, 17-30.

mean a retreat from biblical frameworks. All the articles manage their material in the style typical of traditional Biblical Studies: using philological, archaeological, and chronographical tools to order facts related to Samaritans, then tagged to biblical texts. On this approach to understand Samaritans becomes to understand biblical texts accurately, philologically, and as they were in their ancient context.

This is not an unreasonable approach, but it comes with risks attached. A close connection to the study of the Bible serves to compress the set of questions usually asked of ancient Samaritans, and the topics and concepts to which appearances of Samaritans are usually permitted to speak. Even scholarship which ekes out a space for Samaritans tends to index Samaritan significance to Jewish and Christian scripture. Knowledge of Samaritans has seemed most desirable when deemed significant enough for renovating accurate knowledge of the biblical past – the desire for accurate knowledge a tell-tale sign of how far the epistemological mode of Samaritan Studies remains within, or attached to, the prevailing style of the historical-critical study of the Bible.

Similarly, the Samaritans remain tied to their appearances in the New Testament. Much scholarly interest in the group hinged on the possibility that by expanding knowledge of Samaritans it might be possible to uncover an alternative or obscured history of the time of Jesus, whether that history took the form of a Samaritan Jesus, Jesus' Samaritan followers, or the New Testament's Samaritan sources, or, most often, the Samaritans portrayed as a case study in which Jewish difference-making, and thus rejection of Christianity, could be figured. Samaritans, when they have

appeared in scholarship, have appeared for specific reasons and with particular results, partly because they have remained the preserve of scholars of biblical texts.

### *Samaritans and the Study of Late Antiquity: Beyond Method*

I suggest decoupling the study of Samaritans from Biblical Studies by bringing Samaritans instead into ongoing discussions in the cluster of disciplines associated with the study of religion in late antiquity (c.200-800CE).<sup>24</sup> By rehousing the study of Samaritans in ongoing interdisciplinary conversations in a broader field, I aim to free Samaritan significance from the reduction to “the biblical,” and help redirect attention to quite how pervasive the ancient appearances of Samaritans are.

At the time Montgomery was publishing *Samaritans: The Earliest Jewish Sect*, the concept of late antiquity was largely debated in German. Sometimes, *Spätantike* acted as a characteristic, in a debate over whether artistic and aesthetic sense was autochthonous or inherited. In the (race-science inflected) debates between the Josef Strzygowski and the Alois Riegl, both focused on the question of Roman versus Islamic art.<sup>25</sup> Was Roman art derivative, an old decrepit style contrasted with the youthful national spirit of the East? Or did it have its own durability? At other times, *Spätantike* was linked to the Christianization of Rome, as in Jakob Burckhardt’s *Die*

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<sup>24</sup> For overviews, see Rita Lizzi Testa, “Introduction” in *Late Antiquity in Contemporary Debate*, ed. Rita Lizzi Testa (Newcastle Upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2017).

<sup>25</sup> Alois Riegl, *Die spätromische Kunstindustrie nach den Funden in Österreich-Ungarn* (Vienna, 1901); tr. R. Winkes, *Late Roman Art Industry* (Roma: Georgio Bretschneider, 1985); Josef Strzygowski, *Orient oder Rom: Beiträge zur Geschichte der spätantiken und frühchristlichen Kunst* (Leipzig, 1901). See Jaś Elsner, “The Birth of Late Antiquity: Riegl and Strzygowski in 1901,” *Art History* 25 (2002): 358-79; Susanne Marchand, “The Rhetoric of Artifacts and the Decline of Classical Humanism: The Case of Josef Strzygowski,” *History and Theory* 33 (1994): 106-30.

*Zeit Constantins des Grossen* (1853).<sup>26</sup> Narratives about a period of “late ancient” political shift caused by the reconfiguration of the relationship between state and church, with the Roman Empire as case in point, energized Enlightenment discussions.<sup>27</sup> Garth Fowden tracks the period even to the Renaissance, as exemplified by Valla’s famous debunking of the *Donatio* of Constantine, and the effect of the Protestant Reformation in drawing attention to ecclesiastical history and thus archaeology in the period.<sup>28</sup>

In more recent scholarship, however, Peter Brown’s *World of Late Antiquity* marked a turn of the tide.<sup>29</sup> Explicitly an intervention into histories of the later Roman Empire which emphasized the unimportance of anything after the third century (in the shadow of Mikhail Rostovtzeff), and/or relied on historical narrative of change as catastrophe generated by emphasis on politic and economic continuity as the marker of a society’s durable identity (in the spiritual tradition of Edward Gibbon.)<sup>30</sup> In its place, Brown expanded geographical borders, decentred a politics-driven model of historical narrative, opened spaces for “non-classical” religion to nevertheless

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<sup>26</sup> Garth Fowden, *Before and After Muhammad: The First Millennium Refocused* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 24.

<sup>27</sup> Clifford Ando, “Empire and Aftermath,” in Lizzi Testa, *Contemporary Debate*, 2-14.

<sup>28</sup> Fowden, *Before and After Muhammad*, 20-21.

<sup>29</sup> Peter Brown, *The World of Late Antiquity, from Marcus Aurelius to Muhammad* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1971); see also reflections and essays in the forum “World of Late Antiquity Revisited,” *Symbolae Osloenses* 72 (1997): 5-90.

<sup>30</sup> Peter Brown, “*SO Debate*: The World of Late Antiquity Revisited,” *Symbolae Osloenses* 72 (1997): 5-30, at 5-6.



participate in thoroughly “Roman” social structures, and stressed the particularity of Mediterranean rhythms of long-duration change.<sup>31</sup>

The first compelling reason to bring Samaritans into late antiquity is that most of our oldest evidence for ancient Samaritans belongs to sources in this period, thus beyond the purview of Biblical Studies. In the late antique eastern Mediterranean, despite intensive Christianization—or perhaps, as Andrew Jacobs recognizes in the case of representations of Jews, because of it—Samaritans appear with increased visibility in Christian sources; letters, imperial *novellae*, histories, chronicles, hagiographies, heresiology. In addition, they feature prominently in rabbinic literature, from Mishnah to midrash and Talmud. From this period, also, come our first definitively Samaritan-authored literature: synagogal poetry or *piyyut*, the Samaritan liturgy, as well as earlier sections from the great Samaritan midrash *Tibât Mârqe*.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> In line with increasing emphasis by historians of the Mediterranean on the sustained structuring of Mediterranean societies by the sea itself and its surrounding environments: see Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell, *The Corrupting Sea: A Study of Mediterranean History* (London: Blackwell Publishers, 2000); Chris Wickham, *Framing the Early Middle Ages: Europe and the Mediterranean, 400-800* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), both following the influential work by the Annales School historian Fernand Braudel.

<sup>32</sup> For a good overview with close attention to the manuscript situation—peculiarly important for Samaritan material—see Alan D. Crown, *Samaritan Scribes and Manuscripts* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), 1-39. The most accessible overview of Samaritan literature pertinent to the Roman Empire is Ingrid Hjelm, “Samaritans” in the ongoing online publication of *The Oxford Handbook of the Literatures of the Roman Empire*, ed. Daniel L. Selden and Phiroze Vasunia (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015.)

Moreover, much of this late material is readily available.<sup>33</sup> We have to date three separate handbooks of collected sources sampling and translating legal, rabbinic, and patristics material; one in German, one in Italian, and one in English.<sup>34</sup> An ongoing series from De Gruyter continues to publish important translations and conference proceedings in its *Studia Judaica/Studia Samaritana* series.<sup>35</sup> Key works of later Arabic Samaritan historiography, specifically the chronicle of Abu l’Fath and his *Continuatio*, have both been published in translation, although the former (as well as the accompanying version of the Arabic text) remains for now out of print.<sup>36</sup>

Growing specialist access to this underworked Samaritan material has increasingly drawn scholarly attention. As Leah Di Segni wrote more than ten years ago:

“Students of late antiquity, who until recently viewed the history or the theological strife of the period as a confrontation of pagans, Jews, and Christians (or at most of pagans, Jews, Christians and “heretics”), now identify another contestant in the arena, one whose character, social

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<sup>33</sup> Andrew S. Jacobs, *Remains of the Jews: The Holy Land and Christian Empire* (Stanford University Press, 2004) 193-199. These range from a letter of Palestinian bishops to Jerome complaining about Samaritan stupidity (c.399) to sixth-century imperial *Novellae* negotiating Samaritan unrest and revolt (*Nov.* 44, 529CE; *Nov.* 129, 551CE; *Nov.* 144, 572CE), to clear support for the group by the metropolitan bishop of Caesarea, Sergius (*Nov.* 129, 551CE) to powerful aristocratic representation at Constantinople especially linked to the family of Arsenius at Beth Shean (Procopius of Caesarea, *Secret History* 12-13), to accounts of bloody Samaritan revolt (Procopius, *Secret History* 11.29-30; Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Sabae* 70 and 73; Malalas, *Chron.* 50.18).

<sup>34</sup> Jürgen Zangenberg, *SAMAREIA: Antike Quellen zur Geschichte und Kultur der Samaritaner in deutscher Übersetzung* (Tübingen: Francke, 1994); with an emphasis on legal material, Alfredo M. Rabello Giustiniano, *Ebrei e Samaritani: Alle Luce delle fonti Storico-Letterarie, Ecclesiastiche e Giuridiche* (2 vols.; Milan: Dott. A. Giuffrè, 1987); Reinhard Pummer, *Early Christian Authors on Samaritans and Samaritanism: Texts, Translations and Commentary* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002).

<sup>35</sup> Including, perhaps most excitingly, a new edition and translation of the midrash *Tibât Mârqe*, edited and translated by Abraham Tal (forthcoming 2020).

<sup>36</sup> *The Continuatio of the Samaritan Chronicle of Abū l-Fath al-Sāmīrī al-Danaftī*, ed. and trans. Milka Levy-Rubin (Studies in Late Antiquity and Early Islam 10; Princeton: The Darwin Press, 2002); *The Kitab al-Tarikh of Abū l-Fath*, trans. Paul Stenhouse (Sydney: Mandelbaum Trust, 1985).

status, motivations, and general Weltanschauung, are far from well known.”<sup>37</sup>

Since Di Segni’s review, interest in Samaritans has continued to redress that lack of knowledge. In 2009, the Museum of the Good Samaritan opened on the route between Jericho and Jerusalem.<sup>38</sup> Steven Fine curated an exhibit at the now sadly deceased Museum of Bible Art (MOBIA).<sup>39</sup> An upcoming exhibition at Yeshiva University in 2021 is planned to coincide with a documentary film in collaboration with the New Fund for Cinema and Television. Scholarship has largely kept pace.<sup>40</sup> Recently, for example, Hagith Sivan’s monograph on late antique Palestine incorporated Samaritans as a major character in the history of the region.<sup>41</sup> Building on excavations, Rina Talgam gives an overview of mosaics in collective context.<sup>42</sup> Laura Lieber has written expansively and ambitiously on Samaritan liturgical poetry, as well as midrash.<sup>43</sup> Yair Furstenburg has incorporated Samaritans into discussions

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<sup>37</sup> Di Segni, “*Early Christian Authors*,” 241. For a similar judgement on the Samaritans coming out of the scholarly shadows, see Magnar Kartveit, *The Origin of the Samaritans* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 15.

<sup>38</sup> For the *Biblical Archaeology Society* press release: <https://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/exhibits-events/museum-of-the-good-samaritan-opens-in-israel/>. Note that the present-day Samaritan community have mixed feelings about the museum, arguing it both Christianized the Samaritan past in a way that erased Christian persecution of Samaritans and misunderstands the Good Samaritan parable, with Binyamin Tsedaka following both Yitzhak Magen and Shemaryahu Talmon (and before them, Lukan scholarship in Enslin and Hálevy, see my forthcoming article “The Good Samaritan Israelite”): <https://www.israelite-samaritans.com/history/good-samaritan-museum/>.

<sup>39</sup> See: <https://www.yu.edu/cis/activities/exhibitions>.

<sup>40</sup> <http://nfct.org.il/blog/הוועד-החדש-עדת-השומרונים-עבר-הוועד-ועתי/>.

<sup>41</sup> Hagith Sivan, *Palestine in Late Antiquity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

<sup>42</sup> Rina Talgam, *Mosaics of Faith: Floors of Pagans, Jews, Samaritans, Christians, and Muslims in the Holy Land* (University Park: Penn State University Press, 2014).

<sup>43</sup> Laura Lieber, “‘You have Skirted this Hill Long Enough’: The Tension between History and Rhetoric in a Byzantine Piyyut,” *HUCA* 80 (2009): 63-114; “Forever Let it Be Said: Issues of Authorial Multivocality in a Samaritan Hymn,” *JAJ* 7 (2016): 249-68; “Scripture Personified: Torah as Character in the Hymns of Marqah,” *JSQ* 24:3 (2017): 195-217; see also Ophir Münz-Manor, “Liturgical Poetry in the Late Antique Near East: Comparative Approach,” *JAJ* 1 (2010): 336-61.

of the early self-definition of the rabbinic movement, as has Moshe Lavee.<sup>44</sup> Stefan Schorch has spearheaded a new critical edition of the Samaritan Pentateuch, as well as doing extensive work on a wide range of Samaritan literature and history of scholarship.<sup>45</sup> Even this work, notably, draws heavily on the Arabic translation of the Pentateuch used by Samaritans, adapted from the translation of Saadiya Gaon.

The second benefit of a focus on Samaritans in late antiquity is that the study of late antiquity has over several decades developed a flexible toolkit for dealing with representations, identity, and difference. Rather than the archaeological and philological emphases of Biblical Studies, the scholarly toolkit provided suits a discussion of representation of Samaritans.

Much of this conceptual apparatus emerged from post-war renovation of the Euro-American study of Judaism. Since at least the time of the scholars of the *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, perhaps epitomized by the publication of Abraham Geiger's *Ursprung* in 1857, it had become increasingly clear that the ancient relationship between Judaism and Christianity was important terrain on which to contest and construct both Jewish and Christian identities. From its inception, this realization battled with theological supersessionism. Protestant scholars often emphasized what Wilhelm Bousset called "Late Judaism" (*Spätjudentum*), a Judaism

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<sup>44</sup> Yair Furstenberg, "The Status of the Samaritans in Early Rabbinic Law and the Roman Concept of Citizenship," *Zion* 82:2/3 (2017): 157-192 [Heb]; Moshe Lavee, "Either Jews or Gentiles, Men or Women: The Talmudic Move from Legal to Essentialist Polarization of Identities," *JSQ* 25 (2018): 345-67.

<sup>45</sup> See his own assessment: "A Critical *editio maior* of the Samaritan Pentateuch: State of Research, Principles, and Problems," *HBAI* 1:2 (2013): 100-20.

polemically perceived as spiritually moribund and thus superseded by true religion—Christianity.<sup>46</sup> As Susannah Heschel writes:

“Judaism as a religion is a modern invention, developed in mimicry of Christianity; pre-modern Jewish texts speak instead of Torah and *mitzvot*. ‘Judaism’ was similarly invented by nineteenth-century Protestant theological discourse as a religion of legalism, literalism, and an absence of morality, and was made to function discursively as the abject of the Christian West...as a result, the Judaism that the Jews constructed during the modern period was forced to enter the intellectual world that had created those stereotypes in order to attempt a liberation from Christian hegemony. Out of political necessity, the Jews also had to create their own version of ‘Christianity.’ These projects became the dominant concern of German-Jewish thought, starting in the nineteenth century.”<sup>47</sup>

Contesting the categorical relationship of Jewish to Christian religion gained particular urgency in the later nineteenth century as research in the history of religion, and specifically “Judaism,” coincided with Protestant imperialism and race science. We see this particularly in the form of theologians later supportive of and supported by the Nazis.<sup>48</sup> Susannah Heschel again notes, “Christian scholarly investigation of Jewish history established a radical dichotomy between Christianity and Judaism, which was required to maintain Christian theological order. Presenting the historical relationships between the two religions was simultaneously a construction of

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<sup>46</sup> Wilhelm Bousset, *Die Religion des Judentums in neutestamentlichen Zeitalter* (Berlin: Ruether and Reichard, 1906 [1903], 1-2. Both Martin Jaffee and Anders Runesson credit Bousset with this term as a neologism: Martin Jaffee, *Early Judaism* (Princeton: Prentice-Hall, 1997), 22; Anders Runesson, “Particularistic Judaism and Universalistic Christianity? Some Critical Remarks on Terminology and Theology,” *Journal of Greco-Roman Christianity and Judaism* 1 (2000): 120-144, at 120.

<sup>47</sup> Susannah Heschel, “Revolt of the Colonized: Abraham Geiger’s Wissenschaft des Judentums as a Challenge to Christian Hegemony in the Academy,” *New German Critique* 77 (1999): 61-85, at 62.

<sup>48</sup> For example, Gerhard Kittel, *Die Problem des palästinischen Spätjudentums und das Urchristentum* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1926).

contemporary social relations and of relations of power within the realm of scholarship.”<sup>49</sup>

In the work of Adolf von Harnack, foundational for the study of early Christianity, this developmental view of tired, sterile Judaism replaced by true Christian religion, gained global currency.<sup>50</sup> Against this dismissal of ancient Judaism as *Spätjudentums*, Anglophone theologians occasionally took up the mantle of their German Jewish colleagues. George Foot Moore, a historian of religion, Asianist, and Presbyterian minister, anticipated Heschel’s point, noting that the frozen Jewish “legalism” emphasized by his contemporaries in addressing “primitive Christianity” was the result not of “a fresh and more thorough study of Judaism...but a new apologetic motive, consequent on a different apprehension of Christianity on the part of the New Testament theologians who now took up the task.”<sup>51</sup> James Parkes, likewise, highlighted the long history of Christian anti-Judaism as a way to make visible how far what scholars took as obvious about the Jewish past was the result of pro-Christian prejudice.<sup>52</sup>

By and large, however, as John Gager points out, only in the wake of the Holocaust did it become obvious that Christian scholarship on Jewish antiquity could

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<sup>49</sup> Heschel, “Revolt of the Colonized,” 85.

<sup>50</sup> Andrew S. Jacobs, “The Lion and the Lamb: Reconsidering Jewish-Christian Relations in Antiquity,” in *The Ways that Never Parted: Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Adam H. Becker and Annette Yoshiko Reed (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007 [orig. 2003]), 95-118, esp. 95-108.

<sup>51</sup> George Foot Moore, “Christian Writers on Judaism,” *HTR* 14:3 (1921): 197-254, at 254.

<sup>52</sup> James Parkes, *The Jew and his Neighbour: A Study in the Causes of Anti-Semitism* (London: Student Christian Movement Press, 1930); and especially *The Conflict of the Church and Synagogue: A Study in the Origins of Anti-Semitism* (London: Soncino Press, 1934).

not return to business as usual.<sup>53</sup> This discomfort was particularly appropriate given the cooperation of German Christian scholars with the erasure of Jewishness from their accounts of Christian origins, the declaration that Jesus was Aryan, and with the Nazi Final Solution.<sup>54</sup> In this context, Marcel Simon's post-war *Verus Israel*, provided a turning point.<sup>55</sup> Simon influentially argued that early Christian anti-Judaism should be understood not as Christian supersession of a dying faith, but in terms of conflict between upstart Christians and resurgent Jews. As Simon writes:

“If Judaism had withdrawn into itself, then it no longer really confronted the Church but restricted itself to a conflict in the realm of a theory, to a bookish sterile controversy around the sacred texts. If it was still a proselytizing movement, then it was a real and dangerous foe.”<sup>56</sup>

While Simon absolutely rejected Bousset and von Harnack's notion of sterile Judaism, he did retain various stereotypes regarding the *content* of Judaism in the time of the early followers of Jesus.<sup>57</sup> For example, he does reduce a core of Jewish identity to legal observance critiqued by, in turn, John Gager and E.P. Sanders.<sup>58</sup> Nevertheless, *Verus Israel* disrupted scholarly approaches to Jewish/Christian relations in antiquity, rendering visible for sharp critique, in a post-Shoah context, the way “Judaism” had functioned for scholars, characterized not by careful study of

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<sup>53</sup> John G. Gager, *The Origins of Anti-Semitism: Attitudes toward Judaism in Pagan and Christian Antiquity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 13.

<sup>54</sup> Susannah Heschel, *The Aryan Jesus: Christian Theologians and the Bible in Nazi Germany* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008).

<sup>55</sup> On Marcel Simon and Jewish Studies see Albert I. Baumgarten, “Marcel Simon's *Verus Israel* as a Contribution to Jewish History,” *HTR* 92.4 (1999): 465-78.

<sup>56</sup> Marcel Simon, *Verus Israel: A Study of the Relations between Christians and Jews in the Roman Empire AD 135-425* (Paris: de Boccard, 1964 [1947]; Eng. trans. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986) 271.

<sup>57</sup> Baumgarten, “Marcel Simon,” 466-71.

<sup>58</sup> Gager, *Origins of Anti-Semitism*, 13-23; E.P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* (London: SCM, 1977).

Jewishness in its historical context, but with reference to a representation of “Judaism” as a reified test-subject, tacitly compared to Christianity as its prototypic term. Of all the methodological shifts that emerged as scholars of Judaism and Early Christianity wrestled with Christian anti-Jewishness, this became particularly relevant when discussing identity and difference. In revisiting their approaches to Judaism, scholars, therefore, began to pay very close attention to the mechanics of representation.

The work of Judith Lieu marks a maturation of this discussion.<sup>59</sup> As she pointed out, it had become “truism” to see early Christianity defining against Judaism and “paganism,” but analysis of the interplay as discursively complex remained a desideratum.<sup>60</sup> Lieu’s *Image and Reality* signals the gaining ground in the Anglophone academy of a discursive turn inspired by poststructuralist thought and taken also in France by, for example, Alain Le Boulluec and Herve Inglebert.<sup>61</sup> The ‘parting’ model, Lieu she argued, reflected an approach that would have been recognized by none of its ancient participants—and often did more service, as Geiger, Foot Moore, and Heschel each stated in their own way, for modern theological

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<sup>59</sup> Judith Lieu, *Image and Reality: The Jews in the World of the Christians in the Second Century* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996).

<sup>60</sup> Lieu, *Image and Reality*, 1-2.

<sup>61</sup> La Boulluec, *La notion d'hérésie dans la littérature grecque IIe-IIIe siècles* (2 volumes; Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1985); Inglebert, *Les Romains Chrétiens face à L'Histoire de Rome* (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1996). For the poststructuralist intersection; for a case in point, see Paul Veyne’s personal friendship with Michel Foucault on clear display in the volume he edited of *A History of Private Life: From Pagan Rome to Byzantium*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1987). See also Averil Cameron, “Redrawing the Map: Early Christian Territory after Foucault,” *Journal of Roman Studies* 76 (1986): 266-71.



needs.<sup>62</sup> Much of the fruit of interventions like that of Lieu was collected in Adam Becker and Annette Yoshiko Reed's *The Ways that Never Parted*, which has served as a staging post for further research.<sup>63</sup>

This turn to rhetoric and representation in the construction of identity and self-conscious critique of inherited theological categories has re-equipped the study of ancient Judaism and Christianity. Rather than understanding the two developmentally, in line with theological assumptions about Christianity superseding Judaism, they came to be understood in an extended, dialectic, ongoing relationship.<sup>64</sup> Even when many scholars of New Testament Studies insist on an early "Parting," and the corresponding assumptions about Judaism and Christianity as distinct conceptual

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<sup>62</sup> Judith Lieu, "'The Parting of the Ways': Theological Construct or Historical Reality?" *JSNT* 56 (1994): 101-119.

<sup>63</sup> The phrase "ways that never parted" has become such a staple of the discussion that volumes pun on it to make a point; see Lori Baron, Jill Hicks-Keeton, and Matthew Thiessen (eds.), *The Ways that Often Parted: Essays in Honor of Joel Marcus* (Atlanta: SBL Press, forthcoming 2018).

<sup>64</sup> Adam H. Becker and Annette Yoshiko Reed, "Introduction: Traditional Models and New Directions," in Becker and Reed, *The Ways that Never Parted*, 1-34. For reviews of the metaphor of "parting," its scholarly use, and an interrogation of its effects, see Annette Yoshiko Reed, "Prolegomenon: Christian Origins as Jewish History," in her *Jewish-Christianity and the History of Judaism: Collected Essays* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2018), 1-14. Adele Reinhartz, "A Fork in the Road or a Multi-Lane Highway? New Perspectives on the 'Parting of the Ways' between Judaism and Christianity" in *The Changing Face of Judaism: Christianity and other Greco-Roman Religions in Antiquity*, ed. Ian Enderson and Gerbern Oegema (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2006), 278-329; Anders Runesson, "Inventing Christian Identity: Paul, Ignatius, and Theodosius I," in *Exploring Early Christian Identity*, ed. Bengt Holmberg (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 59-92; James Carleton Paget, *Jews, Christians and Jewish Christians in Antiquity* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 3-24.

entities at an early stage, attention to representation has become an assumed desideratum in any attempt to talk Jewish/Christian difference.<sup>65</sup>

Rhetorical performance and its complex relationship with regulating “real” difference has provided fertile ground on which scholars including (but not limited to) Robert Wilken, Averil Cameron, Peter Brown, Thomas Sizgorich, and Christine Shepardson, and Dayna Kalleres developed an approach to identity formation in late antiquity that does not rely straightforwardly on any one narrative explanation for Christianity’s importance in the fourth-century Mediterranean.<sup>66</sup> Instead, they investigated how late antique individuals constructed Christianity—and were constructed as Christians—through centuries of interaction with real, imagined,

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<sup>65</sup> Lieu’s work was partially galvanized by conversation in British New Testament Studies at the time, a conversation which paid less attention to rhetoric and more to excavating the real boundaries of groups behind texts, especially drawing on social-scientific models: James D.G. Dunn, *The Parting of the Ways: Between Christianity and Judaism and their Significance for the Character of Christianity* (London: SCM Press, 1991); James D.G. Dunn, ed., *Jews and Christians: The Parting of the Ways AD 70 to 135* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992); Richard Bauckham, “The Parting of the Ways: What Happened and Why,” *Studia Theologica* 47.2 (1993): 135-151. Dunn has recently returned to his earlier works, providing an instructive example of how New Testament Studies has tended to decouple from the opportunities offered by other disciplines in this regard. See recently a number of excellent essays amongst those in the frequently polemical (with the editors aiming at “what really happened” (6)) Peter J. Tomson and Joshua J. Schwartz, eds. *Jews and Christians in the First and Second Centuries: How to Write their History* (Leiden: Brill, 2014). See also as an example Marius Heemstra’s attempt to present numismatic evidence on the assumption that it can attest accelerated categorical difference of Jews and Christians in the eyes of Rome: *The Fiscus Judaicus and the Parting of the Ways* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010).

<sup>66</sup> Robert L. Wilken, *John Chrysostom and the Jews: Rhetoric and Reality in the Late 4<sup>th</sup> Century* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2004 [1983]); Averil Cameron, *Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991); Peter Brown, *Power and Persuasion* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1992); Thomas Sizgorich, *Violence and Belief in Late Antiquity: Militant Devotion in Christianity and Islam* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009); Christine Shepardson, *Controlling Contested Places: Late Antique Antioch and the Spiritual Politics of Religious Controversy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014); Dayna S. Kalleres, *City of Demons: Violence, Ritual, and Christian Power in Late Antiquity* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2015).

rhetorical, and demonic others.<sup>67</sup> This approach resonates with what Gayatri Spivak has called “sustained and developing work on the *mechanics* of the constitution of the Other.”<sup>68</sup> Attention to the techniques governing interactions between people, groups, and ideas (ancient and modern) contribute to a more robust account of the reasons why those interactions look to us the way that they do. Attention to these mechanics of difference and identity, I argue, also work well employed beyond Jews and Christians to consider representations of Samaritans. I rely heavily on the realization that rhetoric and representation feed one another, and on a model of scholarship that takes as fractal impressions of their worlds, rather than as either mirror or window.

The third reason Samaritans are a good fit for late antiquity is that by bringing Samaritans in the late antique picture we also help solve a puzzle in the study of the period. Despite the extensive specialist work surveyed above, and the pervasiveness of Samaritan presence in antiquity, a search for Samaritans finds them conspicuously absent from most scholarship on religion in late antiquity. This tells us that the absence of Samaritans from much of our scholarly exploration of late antiquity persists despite the wide availability of sources and specialized study.

It is not due to a lack of material for engaging late antique Samaritans, but of the habit governing the selectivity of scholars. This scholarly habit, as I present it, involves two interwoven processes. The first of these is the inheritance of theological

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<sup>67</sup> A point made with particularly helpful acuteness for the first century and a half of “Christianity” by Kotrosits, *Rethinking Early Christian Identity: Affect, Violence, and Belonging* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2014).

<sup>68</sup> Gayatri Spivak, “Can the Subaltern Speak?” in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, ed. Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 271-313, at 294. In addition to her comments in “Can the Subaltern Speak,” see more extensive critique of ways of imagining otherness in *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999). See also Jacobs, *Remains of the Jews*, 209.

and ideological classification from the nineteenth century, according to which Samaritans became a defective racialized offshoot from pre-Christian Judaism. This development was tied to orientalist minoritization of the group, the increasingly exhaustive and anti-Semitic theological scholarship aimed at the Jewishness of Christian origins, and the simultaneous reduction of “Samaritan” to an exegetical trope (in New Testament Studies) or text critical explanans (in the study of Pentateuch). The second process, inhibiting the reformation of these inherited classificatory effects, is how method-based adjustments within scholarly fields shift modes of study while diverting attention away from reconsidering which topics or groups are selected for study.

Similarly, the emphasis on methodological reform in the study of late antiquity has already reshaped how to think about the period. It has, however, often simultaneously exerted a narrowing effect on the texts and sources used by scholars such that much of the above work on Samaritans has remained undigested, or else limited to its own specialist subdiscipline. The adjustment of methodological approach, or reevaluation of traditional historiography, leaves little space for the consideration of completely new questions. Attention to Samaritans provides an opportunity to look again, and to expand scholarly horizons. Introducing Samaritans explicitly into ongoing conversations about identity, difference, and contesting Israel help depolarize discussions of religion in late antiquity that may not always consider how they might rely on an inherited (theological) binary of Jewish versus Christian.

## *Identity Matters: Problems with Identity in Studying Late Antique Religion*

On the one hand, therefore, the focus of various fields dealing with late antiquity – Jewish Studies, Patristics, Rabbinics – has resulted in a renewed attention to representation, identity, and difference. It has produced good work, but it has often paid less attention to the selectivity according to which topics garner mention or neglect. Thus, it has not arrested a relative minoritization of Samaritans well underway by the turn of the twentieth century. On the other hand, within Samaritan Studies, scholars have relied on well-established scholarly methods of philology, archaeology, and close reading to successfully reconstruct and reclaim much of Samaritan history for the attention of scholars. They have not, however, often drawn on more robustly theorized methodological shifts present in cognate disciplines beyond Biblical Studies. Rehousing Samaritans in late antiquity is an opportunity to combine the work done in making the archive of ancient Samaritans available with a sophisticated toolkit that examines the construction of religious identity and difference while also reflecting critically on the stakes of scholarly practice.

In the final part of my introduction, I scrutinize a concept this dissertation both relies on and remodels, a concept particularly influential in approaches to “religion” in late antiquity: identity. A complex concept, with a variety of fluid and fuzzy meanings, scholars increasingly argue that the effective use of “identity” has run its course.<sup>69</sup> As Rogers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper argued:

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<sup>69</sup> See Annette Yoshiko Reed, “After ‘Origins,’ Beyond ‘Identity,’ and Before ‘Religion(s)’” in Reed, *Collected Essays*, 389-438; esp. 401-21.

“...the social sciences and humanities have surrendered to the world “identity”; that this has both intellectual and political costs; and that we can do better. “Identity,” we argue, tends to mean too much (when understood in a strong sense), too little (when understood in a weak sense), or nothing at all (because of its sheer ambiguity). We take stock of the conceptual and theoretical work “identity” is supposed to do and suggest that this work might be done better by other terms, less ambiguous, and unencumbered by the reifying connotations of ‘identity.’”<sup>70</sup>

Brubaker and Cooper understand “identity” as a tool, problematic because it has been forced to do double duty. On the one hand, as a category of “social and political *practice*,” and on the other, as a category of “social and political *analysis*.”<sup>71</sup> Some scholars of late antique Christianity have used these observations to argue for avoiding “identity” used as an analytic. Todd Berzon, for example, comments that scholars have focused on early Christian use of ethnic reasoning and rhetorical strategies. To their questions about how such strategies were used, he writes:

“...the answer these scholars provide, however, is almost uniformly the same: ethnic discourse was part of, even a critical part of, an adaptable and functional Christian identity; that is, how Christians described themselves as a community or group defined by notions of descent, history, custom and belief. And while this claim is, to some degree, unassailable—it is clear that Christians thought about themselves through the terms *genos*, *ethnos*, *natio*, and so on—there is more to ethnic reasoning than the forging of identity or even identities. Ethnicity encapsulates more than the distinction between self and other or even the idea of the self as other.”<sup>72</sup>

The flattening critiqued by Berzon is precisely that which Brubaker and Cooper warned against: “Conceptualizing all affinities and affiliations, all forms of belonging, all experiences of commonality, connectedness, and cohesion, all self-understandings and self-identifications in the idiom of “identity” saddles us with a

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<sup>70</sup> Rogers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper, “Beyond ‘identity’,” *Theory and Society* 29 (2000): 1-47, at 1.

<sup>71</sup> Brubaker and Cooper, “Beyond ‘identity’,” 4.

<sup>72</sup> Todd Berzon, “Ethnicity and Early Christianity: New Approaches to Religious Kinship and Community,” *CBR* 16:2 (2018): 191-227, at 221.

blunt, flat, undifferentiated vocabulary.”<sup>73</sup> Instead, Berzon argues, scholars should look “beyond the framework of identity” to the larger strategies in accordance with which early Christians ordered their world, and their knowledge about it.<sup>74</sup>

In pointing to the importance of framing knowledge claims, Berzon is right. Nevertheless, we can move beyond the perceived failure of “identity” as an analytic tool in at least two ways besides retiring the term. One option is to use frustration at its flattening affect, and its tendency to manufacture a monoculture of academic attention, to motivate conceptual refinement. Can we incorporate processes producing identity, regimes of identity, into our array of strategic frames for analysis? For example, Éric Rebillard gives an account of “identity” in a broader externalist sense very unlike those scholars critiqued by Berzon; those who telescope questions of rhetorical strategy into an artificially narrowed “Christian identity” indexed by “how Christians described themselves”. Instead, Rebillard draws on further developments of the concept in sociological terms, including Bernard Lahire’s model of the “plural actor.”<sup>75</sup>

The second option: to turn the failure of “identity” into an analytic tool to better conceptualize the project of the scholar. “Identity” does not work as an analytic tool. Fine. The critique of identity for its analytic emptiness (or excess) rightly rejects a

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<sup>73</sup> Brubaker and Cooper, “Beyond ‘identity’,” 2.

<sup>74</sup> Berzon, “New Approaches,” 221.

<sup>75</sup> Éric Rebillard, “Material Culture and Religious Identity in Late Antiquity,” in *A Companion to the Archaeology of Religion in the Ancient World*, ed. Rubina Raja and Jörg Rüpke (Malden: Wiley Blackwell, 2015), 427-36; Bernard Lahire, *The Plural Actor* (Malden: Wiley Blackwell, 2011). I have found the work of Nira Yuval-Davis stimulating in this regard, who suggests an analogy with the dramaturgical, and how the types of identities we perform depend on our assessment of the degree of conflict in a specific circumstance: “Theorizing Identity: Beyond the ‘us’ and ‘them’ dichotomy,” *Patterns of Prejudice* 44:3 (2010); 261-80.

kind of total personality identity, in line with psychological models of individuation since the 1960s, and the conceptual transposition of that type of identity into a group-making and world-building characteristic.<sup>76</sup> We should not, however, assume Brubaker and Cooper's critique of identity as a sociological tool is decisive. We can push a little harder on their choice of critique. Why is it bad to have a flat, undifferentiated vocabulary? For Brubaker and Cooper, such a vocabulary cannot adequately analyze a set of sociological data. An undifferentiated vocabulary takes complex data and makes it simple. The end goal of their research is a vocabulary that adequately classifies and explains human behavior in societies. What if, however, classification and explanation of data represents only one way of claiming and communicating knowledge about the sorts of things that people do? When doing historical, rather than sociological, research, this point becomes particularly pertinent. Classification and explanation of historical data hews close to a straightforward positivism. It is only one way of doing knowledge with historical archives. In this light, the analytic uselessness of "identity" for classifying and explaining data expresses not the problem of the term so much as the inadequacy of a straightforward explanation- or classification-based metric for valuing successful or unsuccessful historiography.

Moreover, when we conceive scholarship projects as tool-based, as "use" we have already masked our selectivity. If we think on late antique religious affiliation as subject to tools, with "identity" as an inadequate one, we have masked the selectivity that drives us to want to be the sorts of investigators who uncover things like

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<sup>76</sup> See Philip Gleason, "Identifying Identity: A Semantic History," *JAH* 69 (1983): 910-31.



“identity” (but not identity) in our texts. The emphasis on use decentres a reflexive turn; the consistent search for better and better tools overlooks the quiet sneaking back into play of an invisible, epistemically reliable expert subject. As Tomoko Masuzawa points out, this expert voice, an unchallenged subject, often ends up formulating the past in the shape of their own consciousness.<sup>77</sup> By making visible the limits of the term “identity” we illuminate the analytic architecture reliant on having a term like “identity.” We enable attention to the features of our field that affect *us*; that nudge us towards using or discarding “identity” and justifying our use or discarding of “identity” with justifications reliant on concepts such as “use.”

Either way of repurposing “identity” bears fruit. Rogers Brubaker himself took the first of these two paths. his own largely externalist account of identities as ordering constructs seems to have found a way of dealing with identity claims that did not force his data into a one-size-fits-all unified field theory of selves with some irreducible properties. His article “Beyond Identity,” he clarifies, targeted not talk of “identity,” but the way in which “talk of identity” often let “substantivist” claims, which emphasize essential properties, pass as constructivist. When the constructivist core of identity talk is worn openly, talking identity holds fewer risks – and debating identity fewer fears. Brubaker himself uses “identity” to think with, and without anxiety, as in his most recent book.<sup>78</sup> Not because it is unproblematic, but because it is impossible to get away from the fact that in his understanding we, contemporary

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<sup>77</sup> Tomoko Masuzawa, *In Search of Dreamtime: The Quest for the Origin of Religion* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 177-79.

<sup>78</sup> Rogers Brubaker, trans: *Gender and Race in an Age of Unsettled Identities* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016).

humans, continually function vis-à-vis identity categories, their limits, and their force. Brubaker, along with Cooper, noted in “Beyond Identity” that identity “is both a category of practice and a category of analysis.”<sup>79</sup> Ultimately, Brubaker retains identity-talk precisely because of the observable power in the practice of identity claims and categories.<sup>80</sup> The very lack of clarity of identity as a category of analysis makes it so useful as a category of practice – and thus so important as a site for academic attention.

The second emphasis on a doubled approach to “identity” – continued relevance and analytic critique –resembles more the perceptive argument by Susan Fraiman about alternate genealogies of the term “identity” available to animal studies, especially vis-à-vis gender studies. She writes, in sharp critique of those who try to categorically rule out the incorporation of gender, race, and sexuality into discussions of posthumanism—because of their fuzziness—that identity can be thought of both “as the rhetorical basis for demanding “rights,” as a discursive category that is necessarily both intersectional and situational, or as a regime to be demystified and disavowed.”<sup>81</sup> Thus, identity matters because it is a discursive category that continues to be situationally relevant, and because it functions as a discursive regime limiting thought, and action, even veiling its own operations.

I therefore follow Brubaker, Fraiman, and others. The sticky, clumsy failure of identity to grant us precision is exactly its benefit. We get a term which wears its

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<sup>79</sup> Brubaker and Cooper, “Beyond ‘identity’,” 5.

<sup>80</sup> Rogers Brubaker, *Grounds for Difference* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015); on the power of “identity claims,” see 74-81; for “categorical identity” see 44-45.

<sup>81</sup> Susan Fraiman, “Pussy Panic versus Liking Animals: Tracking Gender in Animal Studies,” *Critical Inquiry* 39.1 (2012): 89-115, at 114.

analytic failures visibly on its sleeves—in a way which other terms, equally reliant on theorization but not so visibly flawed, tend to sublate or mask. Correspondingly, scholars who object to “identity,” by doing so, show cleanly and immediately with which types of priorities and epistemological assumptions they work. This dissertation aims to *both* understand late antique regimes of identity better, by attention to their shape, form, categories, and content *and* to mark, render visible, and adjust where necessary, scholarly patterns of selectivity in approaching the history of Jewish and Christian identity using Samaritans as a foil.

### *Structure of Dissertation*

Scholars sometimes lose sight of our tacit comparative acts of selection. We discuss how the Jewish “other” relates to the Christian, and how the Christian “other” cannibalized the Jewish. We discuss the array of rhetorical techniques that made this possible. We critique “identity” because it lacks analytic clarity. But even while we try to dismantle and look beyond an intellectual architecture inherited from the nineteenth century by instead paying attention to how Jewish otherness was constructed, and shuffle our theoretical lexicon, we often habitually narrow our gaze to only two terms: Jewish, and Christian.

Samaritans are pervasive in our sources as well. They lay claim to the same Israelite lineage even though they tend to slide out of our discussions. There is therefore a mismatch between our sources and our analyses, and our expertise in

examining Jewish/Christian construction of identity and otherness can mask it precisely because of its methodological acuity. I suggest attention to Samaritans, a group contesting “Israel” along with Jews and Christians, makes visible the power of selectivity in shaping scholarly narratives. By attention to the group, we see much more clearly the mismatch between ancient variety in an array of others, and relative scholarly binarism. Attention to Samaritans may point the way to a method according to which exploring the array of others involved in generating late antique religious identity without Christian or Jewish as a central prototypic term – even while also granting insights into the history and character of Jewish and Christian identities.

In this dissertation, I examine several textual case studies, using Samaritans as an organizational first principle to reorder our late antique archive, and to combine method-based adjustments from Jewish Studies and the study of early Christianity into contact with a shift of emphasis onto a minority group often passed over in silence. This rehousing, also, makes visible for critique some of the scholarly habits engaged in this introduction that continue to shape the study of ancient religious identity: a tendency to retain theological prioritization of “religious” identities, specifically Jewish and Christian identities, in making narratives of religious difference, and a tendency for critique of scholarship to focus on method rather than the organization of the archive. Attention to Samaritans couples methodological shifts from late antiquity with archival reorganization and narrative shift, to produce binary resistant narratives of Jewish and Christian history, and to adjust how to approach religious identity and self-fashioning in antiquity.

Chapter 1 engages Samaritans in the New Testament, addressing the particular reasons and results limiting scholarly engagement with Samaritans when it comes attached to the study of the New Testament. I argue that within this scholarly field Samaritans most usually receive attention as an ethnic anti-Jew, a proxy for scholarly concerns about Jewishness or about the pre-history of (Gentile) Christian followers. I argue that the scholarly lexicon commonly employed for Samaritans, especially the language of Samaritans as a “despised” ethnic or religious group, relies on an intellectual architecture built on supersessionist theories of Christian distinctiveness. By making this intellectual architecture visible, I pivot away from the confines of the study of the Bible to make a meta-critical intervention that instead connects the New Testament Samaritans more closely with ongoing discussion about ancient Jewish identity.

Chapter 2 explores the variety of representations of Samaritans in our late ancient archive, focusing on the technologizing of Samaritans employed by three fourth-century Christian writers: Cyril of Jerusalem, John Chrysostom, and Amphilochius of Iconium. Samaritans appear in a wide variety of roles used to make Christian difference, from biblical fossil to heresiological cipher, to real religious threat. I suggest, therefore, decompressing alterity in our archive beyond single combat between Christianity and any single “other.” Instead, the process of making Christian identity is a kaleidoscopic process, dealing at different times with different members of an array of different groups, and with taxonomies of difference that reflect this.

Chapter 3 identifies how attention to Samaritans leads us to rethink the mechanics of the heresiological thinking of Christian Empire. In the engagements of Epiphanius

of Cyprus, arch heresy-hunter, with the Samaritans we see, remarkably, how someone at the heart of late ancient Christian empire examines religious difference without centering Christianness. By an expansive, totalizing worldview he decouples knowledge claims about Samaritans from the formation of “Christianness.” By standing at a universally expansive, imperialized centre of religious knowledge, Epiphanius provincializes himself.

In Chapter 4, I turn to the Babylonian Talmud. While some halakhic decisions separate Samaritans as a group from rabbinic “Israel,” the Samaritan claim to Israelite identity never stops serving as a source for rabbinic concern and creativity. Rabbinic classification of Samaritans retains their non-generic difference, unlike the treatment of groups such as *minim* or *goyim*. In the Babylonian Talmud, the Samaritans function, therefore, as an excess and a limit-case for rabbinic identity. They suggest a broadened model of rabbinic difference as self-consciously part of a sustained constellation of identities, including Samaritans, contesting continuity with the Israelite past.

All primary text translations, unless otherwise stated, are my own.